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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DRL AND AF/W

E.O.12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC CASC PHUM PREL PGOV KDEM LI

SUBJECT: LIBERIA: PROTESTERS CALL FOR OUSTER OF PRESIDENT

¶1. SUMMARY. A group of about 50 people demonstrated peacefully at the Embassy on August 7, calling for the creation of a war crimes tribunal and the resignation of President Sirleaf. They also asked

the USG to stop the GOL from harassing Mulbah Morlu. A second demonstration may occur on August 12. END SUMMARY.

¶2. About 50 members of a Liberian group "The Forum" marched in front of the Embassy on August 7, carrying placards and shouting slogans. A large police presence from the Liberia National Police (LNP) and the UN International Police kept an eye on the activities.

The protest was directed against the GOL and there was no threat to any Amcits. The protesters departed peacefully afterwards.

¶3. Three spokesmen presented their demands to Poloff. They apologized for not having a written petition, but stated that their leader, with the petition, had been arrested earlier that day. They asked for the imposition of an international tribunal for war crimes, the resignation of President Sirleaf and others named in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (TRC), the implementation of all recommendations in the TRC Report, and for the USG to intervene and protect Mulbah Morlu, their leader. The spokesmen said they would soon present a written petition.

¶4. Monrovia City Court issued a "Writ of Arrest" the morning of the protest for Mulbah K. Morlu, Jr. on a charge of impersonating officials. He is alleged to be continuing to present himself as the Forum's leader even though the Forum has recently disassociated itself from Morlu after he falsely claimed he met with President Obama for six minutes during the President's visit to Ghana.

¶5. Comment: It was not clear why this group called Morlu their "leader" despite the public disassociation. The group did not prepare a petition so provided their grievances to Poloff orally, and indicated they would return on August 12 (a day before the Secretary's scheduled visit to Liberia) to present a written petition. Post is aware of at least one other demonstration recently held in recent days, this one opposed to the TRC report, that did not come to the Embassy. There may be other demonstrations planned, but we do not foresee any of them becoming violent.

THOMAS-GREENFIELD